

## Message Text

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16

ACTION DLOS-06

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DOT-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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TAGS: PLOS, EFIS, JA

SUBJ: HOKKAIDO JAPAN-SOVIET FISHERY FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

1. SUMMARY: IN AN EFFORT TO REDUCE DAMAGE TO LOCAL FISHERMEN BY SOVIET TRAWLERS IN NORTHERN JAPANESE COASTAL WATERS, HOKKAIDO FISHING COOPERATIVES RECENTLY ORGANIZED A JAPAN-SOVIET FISHERY FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION AS A VEHICLE FOR EXCHANGING INFORMATION AND OPINION WITH THE SOVIETS. THE ASSOCIATION HOPES TO PERSUADE THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO CURTAIL THE OPERATIONS OF ITS TRAWLERS ALONG HOKKAIDO'S PACIFIC COAST IN THE INTERESTS OF SAFETY, CONSERVATION AND GOODWILL. AMID WIDESPREAD SUSPICION HERE THAT THE SOVIETS WILL TRY TO EXPLOIT THIS VENTURE IN PRIVATE DIPLOMACY FOR MAXIMUM ECONOMIC AND PROPAGANDA BENEFIT, THE ASSOCIATION'S LEADERS HAVE DISCLAIMED ANY INTENTION OF INVOLVING THEMSELVES IN TRADE NEGOTIATIONS OR POLITICAL ISSUES. SOVIET INTEREST IN THE ASSOCIATION HAS CONSEQUENTLY WANED, AND THE CHANCES FOR AN EARLY AGREEMENT ARE RATED AS SLIM. END SUMMARY

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2. THE HOKKAIDO JAPAN-SOVIET FISHERY FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION WAS CONCEIVED LAST YEAR BY JUNKICHI KANEHIRA, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOKKAIDO FEDERATION OF FISHING COOPERATIVES, AS MEANS OF REDUCING DAMAGE TO JAPANESE FISHING BOATS AND NETS BY SOVIET TRAWLERS OPERATING OFF THE PACIFIC COAST OF HOKKAIDO. IN 1974-5 THERE WERE ABOUT 1,300 INCIDENTS WHICH INVOLVED DAMAGE TO HOKKAIDO COASTAL FISHERMEN AMOUNTING TO NEARLY \$3.6 MILLION. KANEHIRA CLAIMED TO FEEL THAT THESE INCIDENTS STEEMED FROM SOVIET UNFAMILIARITY WITH HOKKAIDO FISHING GROUNDS AND PRACTICES, AND THAT THEY COULD BE REDUCED THROUGH THE "FRIENDLY" EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND VIEWS BETWEEN JAPANESE AND RUSSIAN FISHERMEN OUTSIDE THE CONTEXT OF FORMAL DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS. IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING A FORUM FOR SUCH EXCHANGE, KANEHIRA ENVISAGED THE ASSOCIATION AS A VEHICLE FOR INDUCING THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO ACCORD FAVORABLE TREATMENT TO HOKKAIDO FISHERMEN IN ITS NORTHERN PACIFIC COASTAL WATERS.

3. LAST DECEMBER KANEHIRA ASKED THE FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE HOKKAIDO BRANCH OF THE JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY, MASAHARU MUTO, TO SOUND OUT SOVIET FISHERIES MINISTER ISHKOV'S REACTION TO THE PROPOSED ASSOCIATION. ALTHOUGH ISHKOV'S RESPONSE WAS ENCOURAGING, MUTO'S ROLE AS INTERMEDIARY AROUSED CONTROVERSY IN HOKKAIDO FISHING CIRCLES. KANEHIRA HAD EVIDENTLY NOT CONSULTED OTHER LEADERS OF LOCAL FISHERMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS BEFORE PICKING MUTO AS HIS EMISSARY TO MOSCOW. MUTO'S PRO-SOVIET LEANINGS AND TIES WITH HOKKAIDO FISH-PROCESSING INTERESTS ALSO FED SUSPICIONS THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD TRY TO USE THE ASSOCIATION TO PROMOTE EXPORTS OF THEIR FISH PRODUCTS TO HOKKAIDO TO THE DETRIMENT OF LOCAL FISHERMEN. IN ADDITION, THE JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTRY WARNED THAT MOSCOW COULD BE EXPECTED TO TRY TO MANIPULATE THIS VENTURE IN PRIVATE DIPLOMACY TO DAMPEN HOKKAIDO-BASED AGITATION FOR THE RETURN OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES.

4. DISPUTES OVER THESE ISSUES NECESSITATED LENGTHY NEGOTIATIONS AMONG HOKKAIDO FISHERMEN'S GROUPS BEFORE THEY AGREED TO SET UP THE ASSOCIATION IN MARCH. TO ALLAY SUSPICION OF SOVIET MANIPULATION, THE ASSOCIATION'S DIRECTORSHIP WAS OFFERED TO MOTOJI KAWABATA, AN ELDER STATESMAN IN HOKKAIDO FISHING CIRCLES WHO ALSO SERVES AS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE TOKYO-BASED LEAGUE FOR THE RETURN OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES. KAWABATA, WHO HAS SERVED AS AN ADVISER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TO THE JAPANESE DELEGATION TO THE ANNUAL SOVIET-JAPAN FISHERY NEGOTIATIONS AND IS FAMILIAR WITH SOVIET NEGOTIATING TECHNIQUES, REPORTEDLY INSISTED AS A CONDITION FOR HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THE ASSOCIATION'S DIRECTORSHIP THAT IT SCRUPULOUSLY AVOID TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. ALTHOUGH THE SOVIET CONSUL GENERAL IN SAPPORO ATTENDED THE ASSOCIATION'S INAUGURAL MEETING IN MAY, THERE IS WIDESPREAD SPECULATION HERE THAT THE SOVIETS ARE LESS THAN PLEASED WITH KAWABATA'S APPOINTMENT.

5. AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED, THE ASSOCIATION INCLUDES THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THIRTY-EIGHT HOKKAIDO FISHERMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS. IT WAS ORIGINALLY ANTICIPATED THAT COASTAL FISHERMEN'S GROUPS, WHICH ARE THE PRINCIPAL VICTIMS OF SOVIET INCURSIONS, WOULD COMPRISE THE BULK OF THE MEMBERS. BUT THE DEMAND OF OFFSHORE AND DEEP-SEA FISHING INTERESTS FOR A VOICE IN THE ASSOCIATION LED TO THE DECISION TO MAKE ITS MEMBERSHIP BROADLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE. THE ASSOCIATION'S FOUR VICE DIRECTORS INCLUDE THE MOST INFLUENTIAL LEADERS IN HOKKAIDO FISHING CIRCLES. IN ADDITION TO KANEHIRA THEY ARE: TEIZO ASARI, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOKKAIDO MANAGEMENT FEDERATION OF FISHING COOPERATIVES; EIICHI ABE, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOKKAIDO CREDIT FEDERATION OF FISHING COOPERATIVES; AND TSUNEZO SETO, CHAIRMAN OF THE HOKKAIDO FEDERATION OF POWER BOAT FISHING COOPERATIVES.

6. THE ASSOCIATION'S FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS WILL BE TO TRY TO PERSUADE THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO CURTAIL ITS TRAWLING OPERATIONS OFF HOKKAIDO'S PACIFIC COAST. DIRECTOR KAWABATA PLANS TO LEAD A DELEGATION TO MOSCOW, POSSIBLY IN SEPTEMBER, TO PRESS SOVIET FISHERIES MINISTER ISHKOV TO AGREE TO SUSPEND OR AT LEAST LIMIT THE ACTIVITIES OF RUSSIAN TRAWLERS WITHIN A COASTAL FISHING ZONE WHICH HOKKAIDO FISHERMEN WISH TO SEE RECOGNIZED AS OFF-LIMITS TO BOTH JAPANESE AND FOREIGN TRAWLERS. THE ASSOCIATION'S REPRESENTATIVES REPORTEDLY WILL ARGUE THAT SOVIET AGREEMENT NOT TO FISH IN THIS ZONE IS ESSENTIAL TO ELIMINATE ACCIDENTS INVOLVING DAMAGE TO HOKKAIDO FISHERMEN AND TO CHECK THE STEADY DEPLETION OF THE ISLAND'S COASTAL FISHERY RESOURCES. OFFICIALS OF THE ASSOCIATION SAY THEY HAVE RECEIVED LITTLE INDICATION THAT THE SOVIETS ARE AMENABLE TO THIS PROPOSAL AND DO NOT EXPECT AN EARLY AGREEMENT.

7. COMMENT: DESPITE SUBSTANTIAL ATTENTION FROM PRESS AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EXPRESSIONS OF MOFA CONCERN, SO FAR FISHERY FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION HAS, IN FACT, DONE NOTHING MORE THAN ORGANIZE. MOREOVER SERIES OF INCIDENTS INVOLVING RUSSIAN TRAWLERS IN JUNE, SOON AFTER ASSOCIATION CREATED, HAVE INCREASED SKEPTICISM ABOUT PROSPECTS OF ANY REAL SUCCESS. NEVERTHELESS, IN VIEW OF ONGOING INTEREST IN FISHING-RELATED MATTERS, ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES WILL BEAR WATCHING IN MONTHS AHEAD.  
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